

REMARKS

I. Introduction

Claims 2, 4 to 12, 15 to 18, and 20 are currently pending in the present application. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

Applicant notes with appreciation the acknowledgment of the claim for foreign priority and the acknowledgment that all certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for considering the previously filed Information Disclosure Statement, PTO-1449 paper and cited references.

II. Drawings

The drawings have been amended herein to render moot the present objection. Withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is therefore respectfully requested.

III. Specification

The Specification is objected to because of alleged informalities with respect to the use of the word “exceedance.” It is respectfully submitted that the use of this word in the Specification is proper. For the Examiner’s convenience, attached hereto is a document which provide the definition of “exceedance” (see attached reference from <http://dictionary.reference.com>). Accordingly, because the Specification does not contain any informalities, no amendment is deemed necessary.

IV. Claim Objections

Claims 4 to 6, 8, 15, and 16 are objected to because of alleged informalities with respect to the use of the word “exceedance.” It is respectfully submitted that the use of this word in the claims is proper (for the reasons stated above in connection with the Specification). Accordingly, because the claims do not contain any informalities, no amendment is deemed necessary.

V. Rejection of Claims 1 to 3, 7, 9 to 14, and 17 to 20 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1 to 3, 7, 9 to 14, and 17 to 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,313,742 (“Larson”). It is respectfully submitted that Larson does not anticipate the present claims for the following reasons.

As an initial matter, claims 1, 3, 13, 14, and 19 have been canceled herein, rendering moot the present rejection with respect to these claims.

Claims 2, 7, and 9 have been amended herein to depend from claim 4, and therefore include all of the limitations of claim 4. Since Larson does not anticipate claim 4, it is therefore respectfully submitted that Larson does not anticipate claims 2, 7, and 9, which depend from claim 4.

Claims 10 and 11 ultimately depend from, and therefore include all of the limitations of, claim 7. It is therefore respectfully submitted that Larson does not anticipate claims 10 and 11 for the same reasons set forth above in support of the patentability of claim 7.

Claim 12 depends from, and therefore includes all of the limitations of, claim 2. It is therefore respectfully submitted that Larson does not anticipate claim 12 for the same reasons set forth above in support of the patentability of claim 2.

Claim 17 has been amended herein to depend from claim 15, and therefore includes all of the limitations of claim 15. Since Larson does not anticipate claim 15, it is therefore respectfully submitted that Larson does not anticipate claim 17, which depends from claim 15.

Claims 18 and 20 have been amended herein to include subject matter analogous to that of claim 4. It is therefore respectfully submitted that Larson does not anticipate claims 18 and 20 for at least the same reasons that Larson does not anticipate claim 4.

VI. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant notes with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter contained in claims 4 to 6, 8, 15, and 16. In this regard, the Examiner will note that claims 4, 8, and 15 have been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of their respective base claims. It is therefore respectfully submitted that claims 4, 8, and 15 are in condition for immediate allowance. Since claims 5 and 6 depend from claim 4, it is respectfully submitted that claims 5 and 6 are also in condition for immediate allowance. Since claim 16 depends

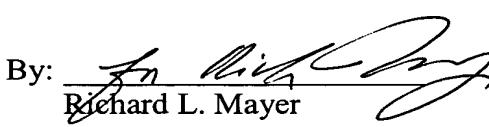
from claim 15, it is respectfully submitted that claim 16 is also in condition for immediate allowance.

VII. Conclusion

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims 2, 4 to 12, 15 to 18, and 20 are in condition for allowance. Prompt reconsideration and allowance of the present application are therefore earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Amendments to the Drawings:

Attached hereto are four (4) replacement sheets of drawings, which include Figures 1 to 4. Figures 1 to 4 have been amended to remove annotations exterior to appropriate blocks. No new matter has been added.

Attachments: Four (4) Replacement Sheets